

Power Hunger Called Driving Force

By HENRY BAILEY
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Now, even four days after the insanity in the Guyanese jungle, attorney Mark Lane wonders how it really came about.

"I haven't been able to figure that one out," he said quietly. "I just don't know."

He brushed his steely gray streaked hair with a hand whose fingers were dotted with bandages.

So was the other hand, mute reminders of his desperate run into the briars, branches and spikes of a tropical rain forest to escape the death by poison and bullets meted out to more than 400 members of the People's Temple cult at the word of their leader, the Rev. Jim Jones. Jones, now dead, is a man Lane calls a tyrant, whose obsession with power bordered on the obscene.

It was Jones who ordered a knife-wielding truck driver named Don Sly to murder U.S. Rep. Leo Ryan, D-Calif., he said.

Failing in that attempt, it was Jones who ordered several members of the cult, this time armed with shotguns and semi-automatic weapons, to gun down Ryan and his

entourage as they left for the airplane that was to take them away from the area, Lane said.

And it was Jones who voiced a grisly four-step program for his fanatical following that included the killing of "defectors" and the assassination of government officials "to politicize" their actions, he said.

"All this seems far-fetched," Lane says. "But so does mass murder — and it happened. The government should take these threats seriously."

"Jim Jones' thirst for absolute power was so incredible," said Lane, his voice echoing a tone of bitterness tinged with disbelief. "I guess the ultimate proof is somewhere here: when Hitler died, he took Eva Braun and a few others with him. When Jones died, he said he was going to take 1,200 people with him, voluntarily."

"But even that was like the way he supposedly healed people on TV," Lane said. "It was all a deception. It was no mass suicide, as the media has already been sold on it. It was mass murder. Those babies who had poison poured down their throats didn't take a vote."

Lane, the famed — or notorious, as some

critics say — attorney for James Earl Ray, convicted assassin of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., arrived back at his home at 1177 Central late Tuesday.

He and another attorney, Charles Garry, famous for his defense of the Black Panthers, had accompanied the party of Ryan in the hope of serving as counselors between the lawmaker and members of the religious sect who considered Ryan "an enemy, an outsider" there to incite betrayals. Ryan, accompanied by several staff members and newsmen, had gone to the South American country to investigate first-hand — as was his custom — reports that American citizens were being abused at the jungle commune in Guyana.

When did Lane know that disaster was imminent?

"When Jim Jones told me over the radio he was going to put a tractor in the middle of the airstrip, and there is only one, so we wouldn't be able to land, and he wanted me to be on the plane, I knew something was wrong."

"I told him these two conditions were mutually exclusive," said Lane, a wry smile barely evident.

MEMPHIS PRESS-SCIMITAR, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1978

in Guyana Deaths

"He (Jones) said, 'I don't want those people there,' but I told him, 'Look, it won't be so bad.'"

"Jones said, 'They'll just say it's a concentration camp,' but I told him there was nothing to worry about. If I know anything now about Jim Jones, it's that he is clever and deceptive. The kind of person who would tell you, with someone else nearby but unable to hear, that, 'You know, you're the only one I can trust, just you. But I don't trust that other person at all.'"

"Looking back on it, I don't know whether I talked him into it (allowing Ryan's party to visit the compound), or he just engineered that whole conversation, for whatever reasons he had," Lane said.

"The next indication I had that trouble was coming was when we landed and the plane was immediately surrounded by some very grim and determined men, ohn Jones, Jim Jones' adopted black son, mong them. There was one policeman here, armed with a rifle, but he just wore shirt and slacks, and I thought at the time it was another member."

"We all got off, and (John) Jones said, 'Only you and Garry can come. Tell the

rest of them to get back on the plane.'"

Lane said he took Jones aside and told him this type of reception "was the worst possible thing" that could be done. The young man was adamant.

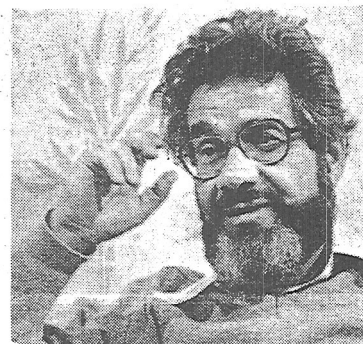
"Garry and I got into a truck and were taken to Jonestown (a settlement named for Jim Jones), and the others were left behind. On the way, we passed a tractor pulling a trailer. At the wheel was Harriet Traub, a 1977 law school graduate and a very crazy lady."

"She shouted, 'Stop! The orders have been changed,' and the new command was to bring in Ryan and the rest."

Lane said he knew Jones would be upset at least by the presence of a man named Gordon Lindsay, a writer for the *National Enquirer* who supposedly had written a sensational account of the sect, but which had not been printed.

Later, finally able to reach Jones by telephone at the compound, Lane said Jones still had reservations but he finally was able to convince the commune leader to admit Ryan and his party.

"But Jones told me, 'If one person leaves, if there is one act of betrayal, it would be a



ATTORNEY MARK LANE

terrible thing. Something will happen."

He said that Jones and his staff stayed close together and it seemed that some members with qualms about the cult were hesitant to talk to them.

"But Don Harris (an NBC news correspondent) stayed apart from the group, sort of on the outside of the area, and was approached, first by a woman, and later by a family of six," he said. Lane said the family expressed a desire to leave Guyana but were afraid to approach Ryan for help.

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Lane: Real Story Is Why Disciples Followed Jones

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But Jones saw this and was determined to do something about it.

"Jones talked to them (the family) for about an hour, saying if they left it would mean betrayal and there could be attacks on the compound. He suggested, if they really wanted to go, to wait a week and leave quietly."

Presently, Lane said, Jones said the family had something to say and the son, Dale Parks, asked Lane to write a letter to Jones on their behalf and they would leave the following week. The attorney said he saw no reason why they would not be free to leave at any time and that a note "one way or the other would do no good. It was about as good as a subway token in the jungle. Anyway, I wasn't going to be there the next week."

"He (Dale) asked someone from the U.S. embassy when he was coming back, and he said in three months. Dale got excited and said, 'Three months! I'm not going to stay three months.'"

"So I told him, 'Leave now,' and Jones heard me say that. And I swear I saw a death warrant in his eyes when I looked at him."

"Around 3 or 4 p.m., Don Harris came up and asked me if I had noticed all the weapons there. I said yes. But more than that, he said, he was worried about statements about a mass suicide and asked me if I knew about that. I said yeah, but that I had not heard about it until recently."

"But the panic level of the leadership (of the commune) was high at this point, and we were both worried."

"Don asked me to go (back with Ryan to the airstrip), but I said no. I wanted to stay and work on this craziness. At the time, we thought the sane thing to do was leave. But it didn't turn out that way," Lane said. Harris was one of the newsmen later killed at the airstrip.

It was then that Sly's attack on the Con-

gressman with the knife occurred, he said. Lane, Garry and several other members of Ryan's group surrounded the attacker and quickly disarmed the man, whose blood stained Ryan's shirt.

Ryan and his group left for the airstrip shortly thereafter.

"I went to talk to Garry, and I told him that I thought Sly never really wanted to kill Ryan," Lane said. "It just didn't add up, if he really meant to kill him, he could have done it quickly, one-two-three, instead of saying, 'I'm going to kill you, you —', and then holding the knife on his throat and chest and not doing anything."

"I believe Jones ordered him to kill the Congressman, but he didn't want to and wanted to make it look like he tried."

At this point, he said, Jones again told him: "Terrible things are happening and I will have to take some action. They're going to blame me (for the attack). We're going to have to take action."

Lane described the leaders of the cult as almost all white, upper middle-class and professional people with "a developed sense of paranoia. Anyone who didn't go along with the crazy things was disloyal."

He said the first thing that came into his mind was Jones' "mass suicide" fixation.

"I didn't bring it up," Lane said. "I didn't want to put the idea in his head."

"I think, though, that Jones had already decided there was going to be mass murder and he was going to direct it."

Lane said he tried to tell Jones that Ryan had talked to many persons who said they love their simple life in the commune and that the lawmaker had assured him his overall judgement would not be clouded by the knifing incident. But he said Jones responded: "Those who leave love me so much they will do terrible things to the enemy and I will be blamed for that."

Lane said Garry hugged him "in a cold embrace" and told him, "I have proof he is going to shoot up that plane. The proof is,

he gave the orders to do so."

He said Sly approached them and, acting as a guard, herded the two men down a hill. "We saw eight or 10 men go to the guard shack and took out a lot of guns, including automatic weapons. There was a lot of firepower there."

"I saw two men pick up a heavy case. It must have been ammunition, because they could only carry it a few feet and then had to stop. They took it all up to the community center, where Jones was talking to the crowd about 'the dignity of death' and 'how great it was to die.'"

"He (Jones) was always big on central democracy. Well, big on centralization, but weak on democracy."

Lane said several men pointed their weapons at him and Garry and announced, "We are all going to die."

"I was interested in knowing if the 'we' included me and Garry, but I was afraid to ask, for fear of getting a disappointing answer."

He said their guard said this was the only way "to fight fascism."

"I said suicide is the very denial of everything they stood for, and that shooting children was the act of a fascist. He just said it was 'beautiful to die.' I thought I would change the subject," Lane said.

The attorney suggested that he and Garry be allowed to write about the last moments of the commune, and the guard agreed, telling them they could call for a plane "as soon as everyone was dead."

"But with all those armed men around, I wasn't about to wait to ask for a plane," Lane said. "I asked him where the road (back to Georgetown) was."

He said he and Garry struck off, first crossing a stream "with flesh-eating piranha in it, and into some scorpion-infested woods."

Lane said he could hear Jones repeating, "Mother, mother, mother," either in reference to his late mother or to his wife.

"Then we heard small arms fire," Lane said.

Garry and he saw three men approaching from the other side of the road, carrying a foot locker.

"I knew there was at least \$3 million in cash there, and that locker didn't look heavy enough to be ammunition," Lane said. Not wanting to get too inquisitive, he said, he and Garry went into the jungle. By now it was 7 p.m. and dark.

"We couldn't tell where we were, so we sat down. We stayed in the brush until dawn. About 7 a.m., Charles said, 'I know how to get out.'"

"I said, 'Charles, obviously you have contempt for this brush. I do not. I have been lost in New Hampshire and Vermont.' But he said he knew the way back to the road." The two promptly got lost, he said.

"We heard people running through the brush," Lane said. "We heard them screaming, and we heard more small arms fire."

By 7:45 a.m., after using strips of fabric as guides to keep from going in circles, he and Garry found their way back to the road. They hailed a passing truck bearing members of the Guyanese national guard and were taken to a local police station.

"A policeman told us, 'You are the first to make it out.' " Lane said. "We asked about Ryan and he said, 'You have not heard? And then he told us. It was our first knowledge of the shootings at the airport.'"

Lane said he was approached by Larry Layton, 32, a Californian charged with the slaying of Ryan, three newsmen and a member of the Parks family.

"He asked me to represent him. I said I would and asked him what happened yesterday. He said, 'I think that in a sense I may be innocent.'"

"I asked him again what happened and he said, 'Well, you're too tired.' I assured him I wasn't and this time he said, 'I'd rather not talk about it.'"

"I decided I would not represent him," Lane said.